

PROCEEDINGS
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BIOLOGICAL SOCIETY OF WASHINGTON

A NEW LIZARD FROM THE RIO GRANDE VALLEY,
TEXAS.

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During the various collecting trips made by the field naturalists of the Biological Survey into western Texas, a series of lizards belonging to the genus *Sceloporus* were collected, which clearly belong to an undescribed species. It forms part of the small section of the genus characterized by the minuteness of the lateral scales, of which, thus far, only two species have been taken within the United States, viz., *S. variabilis* and *S. couchii*. I wish to associate with this very distinct species the name of the originator and chief of the Biological Survey, who has done such an immense work in increasing our knowledge of our vertebrate fauna.

***Sceloporus merriami* sp. nov.**

Diagnosis.—Lateral scales minute, granular; 55 to 56 femoral pores in a continuous series across the preanal region; 56 to 66 scales between the shielded part of the head and the base of the tail; 14 to 18 dorsal scales corresponding to the shielded part of the head; head shields smooth.

Habitat.—Rio Grande Valley, western Texas.

Type.—United States National Museum, No. 33,039; East Painted Cave,

near mouth of Pecos River, Texas, September 2, 1890; W. Lloyd, collector, U. S. Biological Survey.

Description.—Type: Adult male. Head-shields smooth; two canthal scales, between the posterior of which three larger prefrontal shields across the snout; frontal shield divided transversely; posterior frontal separated from interparietal and parietals by two pentagonal frontoparietals which are broadly in contact; interparietal larger than the two parietals together, trapezoid, the width anteriorly somewhat less than posteriorly, the length equalling the greatest width; five large transverse supraorbitals separated from the frontals and parietals by a single series of small scales, and from the superciliaries by a double series; six supralabials, separated from the nasal and from the long subocular by a single series of scales, fourth supralabial under the center of the eye; about five elongate pointed scales at anterior border of ear-opening; dorsal scales small, though nearly twice as large as the ventrals, rounded behind, keeled, forming nearly parallel longitudinal lines; 61 scales along the middle line of the back from the shielded part of the head to the base of the tail; 14 scales in the middle of the back corresponding to the shielded part of the head; lateral scales, including a broad area above the foreleg, minute, granular, in strong contrast to the dorsal and ventral scales; ventral scales smaller than dorsals, smooth, often deeply nicked; scales on throat as large as ventrals, those across the lower neck even larger, more pointed and with the terminal portion more free; sides of neck with strong longitudinal folds joining posteriorly an oblique fold in front of the shoulder, which meets the one of the other side across the lower neck; about 114 scales (and lateral granules) round the middle of the body; adpressed fore limb reaches the groin; adpressed hind limb reaches the center of the eye; tibia a trifle shorter than distance from tip of snout to ear-opening; scales covering upper side of limbs larger than the dorsals, especially those on tibia, each with strong keel ending in a point; 51 femoral pores in a nearly continuous line across the preanal region, only one scale interrupting the series on the middle line; tail covered with keeled scales larger than dorsals, sharply mucronate; well-developed postanal plates.

Color (in alcohol) above, very pale clay color with ill-defined obscure dusky spots on the median portion of the back, and numerous, closely set, whitish dots which are most plainly seen above the insertion of the foreleg; a vertical, narrow, bluish-black line, bordered posteriorly with white, in front of the insertion of the foreleg; underside, white; the throat with indistinct, pale bluish-gray lines and a somewhat ill-defined, large, bluish-black, horseshoe-shaped spot on the lower neck; sides of belly pale blue, with a broad crescentic inner edge of bluish-black leaving only about four scale rows on the middle line of the belly white.

Dimensions.—Total length, 130 mm; tip of snout to vent, 55; tip of snout to ear, 13; width of head, 11; fore leg, 28; hind leg, 42.

Variation.—The scutellation is fairly constant in the series of eight specimens examined by me. The head shields show some variation in the size and number of those covering the snout, but otherwise they are sur-

prisingly uniform, especially the three large prefrontals, the frontals, fronto-parietals and interparietals. In one specimen, No. 33,040, the anterior frontal is semi-divided longitudinally, and in a few there is an extra fronto-parietal due to the division of the fronto-parietal or the separation of the anterior portion of the parietal. The fold across the fore neck is very variable, mostly absent or merely indicated. The variation of proportion and size of scales, femoral pores, etc., will be seen from the subjoined table, but it should be remarked that the great diversity in the scales round the middle of the body is probably due to the difficulty in exactly counting the lateral granules.

The males have well-developed postanal scutes which are lacking in the females.

The variation in color is chiefly confined to the degree of distinctness of the dusky markings above. Thus, No. 33,035 has several series of blackish dorsal spots edged behind with smaller whitish spots; leg, (including digits) and tail, are cross-banded with dusky; there is also a well-marked dusky vertical line from eye to edge of lip and a less distinct line between eye and ear. From this specimen there is a complete gradation to the nearly uniform color of the type. There are no indications of longitudinal pale bands on the back, or of any dark band on the sides.

The females lack the blue, black-edged side patch underneath, and also the horseshoe mark on the fore neck; but there are faint bluish marblings on the throat, and the vertical blackish mark in front of the shoulder is indicated.

Habitat.—Thus far only found in the Rio Grande Valley from the mouth of Pecos River to Boquillas. This species, therefore, seems restricted to the Rio Grande Cañon.

Remarks.—This exceedingly distinct species needs no detailed comparison with other species of this difficult genus. By its continuous line of femoral pores across the preanal region it recalls *Sceloporus scalaris*, but the latter has large lateral scales and is also otherwise very different. The species to which this novelty is most nearly related is probably *Sceloporus couchii*, in which the femoral pores, however, are restricted to the thighs, but the relationship is not near enough to make any further comparison necessary.

It will be noted that the type is described as having a distinct cross-fold under the neck, which is the character attributed by Cope to his genus *Lysoptychus*, based on a single specimen, from southern Texas. This character is absolutely valueless, as it is absent in most of the specimens, and there is nothing else to separate them from the genus *Sceloporus*. As a matter of fact Cope's *Lysoptychus lateralis* is nothing but a specimen of *Sceloporus couchii*, with the types of which I have carefully compared it. I may here correct a mistake in the original description of the latter (Proc. Phila. Acad., 1858, p. 254), in which the number of femoral pores is given as 25. In none of the type specimens (8) is there more than 19 pores on one side. The number varies in the lot between 15-15 and 18-19.

U. S. N. M. No.	Sex and age.	Locality.	When collected.	By whom collected.	Snout to vent.	Shield part of head.	Snout to ear-opening.	Tibia	Fourth toe from base of fifth.	Scales, occip. to tail.	Scales in head-length.	Scales round middle.	Femoral pores.
33,033	♂ ad.	Comstock, Texas.	July 26, 1902	M. Cary.	53	11.5	12.5	13	17	66	18	108	28-28
33,034	♀ ad.	Bogullas, Texas.	May 28, 1901	V. Bailey.	45	10	11	12	14	56	15	106	26-
33,035	♂ a l.	Mouth Pecos R., Tex.	Aug. 3, 1902	M. Cary.	52.5	11	12	13	16	61	16	120	25-25
33,036	.....	E. Painted Cave, Tex.	Sept. 1890	W. Lloyd.	.....	10	10.5	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....
33,037	♂ ad.	" "	Sept. 1, 1890	" "	55	12	13	13.5	16.5	60	17	107	26-27
33,038	♂ ad.	" "	Sept. 3, 1890	" "	49	11	11.5	12.5	17.5	60	16	106	26-27
33,039*	♂ ad.	" "	Sept. 2, 1890	" "	55	12	13	13.5	17	61	14	114	25-26
33,040	♀ ad.	" "	Sept. 2, 1890	" "	49.5	11	11.5	11.5	16	65	17	115	26-26

*Type.